

February 21, 2022

The Honorable Jay Obernolte  
1029 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 6436 – The Japanese American World War II Act

Dear Congressman Obernolte:

On behalf of the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation Foundation, I write to extend our full support for H.R. 6434, the Japanese American World War II History Network Act. The Washington Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving the places that matter in Washington State and to promoting sustainable and economically viable communities through historic preservation. We are Washington's only statewide nonprofit advocacy organization working to build a collective ethic that preserves historic places through education, collaboration, and stewardship.

When Executive Order 9066 took effect 80 years ago, Bainbridge Island became a 'First History' site associated with the mandate: over 225 people of Japanese ancestry (the majority of whom were U.S. Citizens) were the first of over 100,000 individuals to be forcibly removed from their homes along the West Coast. Non-Japanese Bainbridge Islanders were more sympathetic to their Japanese and Japanese Americans neighbors than in some other coastal areas, in many cases stewarding and safeguarding their property until their return from incarceration. But too many cases exist of families losing everything, and not all were able to return to their homes. This episode in our history must not be forgotten.

Establishing the Japanese American WWII History Network within the National Park Service would serve to strengthen education, understanding, and collaboration related to telling the story and impact of EO 9066. This action would supplement other work in which the NPS is currently engaged related to the management of sites of exclusion, such as Minidoka National Historic Site, Manzanar National Historic Site, and the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, to name a few. It would also work in concert with the existing Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program, enabling partners throughout the West Coast to engage in further research, discourse, and preservation of these sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Chris Moore  
Executive Director